

Finding of No Significant Impact
Environmental Assessment for the Grosvenor Camp Facilities Improvement Program
Katmai National Park and Preserve

The National Park Service (NPS) has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) that evaluates a facility improvement program at Grosvenor Camp. The camp is owned and operated by Katmailand, Inc., and is located within Katmai National Park and Preserve (KATM). The NPS entered into a concessions contract with Katmailand, Inc. that requires the concessioner to implement a facilities improvement program at Grosvenor Camp that includes the following construction activities:

- Dismantle and remove two employee housing units
- Construct new utility building
- Convert existing bathhouse into employee housing unit
- Construct one new employee housing unit
- Construct new bathhouse
- Construct new wastewater system
- Remove existing wastewater system
- Upgrade and install electrical distribution system
- Remove existing generator shed and dry storage building

The two existing employee-housing units will be dismantled. Lumber salvaged from these housing units will be used to construct a new utility building (9 ft. x 18 ft.). This structure will be used to house the lodge's generator and six water pressure tanks. The building will not penetrate the subsurface. The exterior walls of the structure will be covered with cedar siding, and the roof will be metal.

The existing bathhouse will be converted into an employee housing unit by removing the plumbed facilities inside the building. These bathroom facilities will be used in the new bathhouse. The exterior of the building will not change in appearance or size.

A new employee cabin (12 ft. x 12 ft.) will be built to accommodate up to two lodge employees. The building will be either of Panabode design or of frame construction with cedar siding and a metal roof. The building will be seated on 6 to 8 treated wood pads placed directly on the ground surface.

A new bathhouse (16 ft. x 20 ft.) will be constructed between the guest cabins. The structure will sit on 8 to 10 treated wood pads placed directly on the ground surface. It will accommodate the use of eight people including two lodge employees. The exterior walls of the structure will be covered with cedar siding, and the roof will be metal.

A new water line from the kitchen to the new bathhouse will be installed. A trench will be dug with a hand shovel, and plastic tubing of 1½-inch diameter will be buried at a depth above the Katmai Ash layer along the existing trail to the bathhouse.

A new wastewater system will be designed to accommodate wastewater flow from the kitchen and the new bathhouse. The design will include a septic tank with a capacity up to 1,000 gallons and an infiltrator field. The septic tank will be located directly behind the new bathhouse with the infiltrator field running east to west.

The septic tank will be buried about 7 feet below the original ground surface. The infiltrator field will be approximately 30 feet long, 3 feet wide, one foot in height and buried 3 feet below the original ground

surface. The location of the new leach field will be over 150 feet from surface water. The excavated dirt will be used to bury the system in place and form a mounded soil cover about 2 feet deep.

The existing sewage pit will be dismantled and filled in with soil remaining from the excavation for the leach field. Sewer lines will extend from the kitchen to the leach field and from the new bathhouse to the leach field. Existing waterlines to the existing sewage pit from the kitchen and from the old bathhouse will be removed.

The existing electrical distribution system will be upgraded to meet OSHA requirements and redistributed to the new buildings requiring electricity. New and upgraded wire will be buried up to 12" deep and above the Katmai Ash Layer. The existing generator shed and the dry storage building will be dismantled.

The facilities improvement program will begin in the spring of 2002 and be completed by December 31, 2003. The majority of the construction will occur between the months of June and October.

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve health and safety conditions at Grosvenor Camp as well as improve visitor satisfaction of the facility. The existing facilities at Grosvenor Camp have not been upgraded since their initial construction. This project will enable Grosvenor Camp to be in compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements and electric codes as well as NPS standards for employee housing and satisfactory visitor services.

Public Involvement

The EA had a 30-day public comment period beginning January 28, 2002 and ending February 27, 2002. The EA was mailed to ___ agencies, organizations, and individuals. The Lake and Peninsula Borough and the National Parks and Conservation Association (NPCA) commented on the EA. Both concurred with the NPS's proposed facilities improvement program at Grosvenor Camp.

Alternatives

The EA also evaluated a no-action alternative. Under this alternative NPS would amend the concessions contract to eliminate the facilities improvement program. The current employee housing would remain substandard and a health hazard. The current wastewater system would continue to be unsafe and would be inadequate for the amount of wastewater generated at the camp. The current generator would remain inefficient because it is located too far from buildings that utilize electricity. The no-action alternative is the environmentally preferred alternative.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation to be taken in conjunction with implementing the NPS preferred alternative include:

Cultural Resources: In order to avoid affecting archeological resources, the proposed leach field site would be investigated prior to excavation by the Lake Clark/Katmai Historic Preservation Coordinator. In the event that archeological resources are discovered, a Determination of Eligibility would be conducted. If a new leach field site cannot be identified, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) that incorporates comments from consulting parties would be executed. The MOA would specify measures to mitigate adverse effects. Additionally, prior to removal, dismantling or alteration of any of the camp buildings, a Determination of Eligibility for the National Historic Register would be conducted by the

National Historic Register Historian. The proposed facilities improvement program would incorporate mitigation measures in order to avoid adverse effects on eligible historic resources.

Site Revegetation: Newly exposed ground surfaces located at the sites of the removed employee housing units, the generator shed and dry storage building would be scarified and allowed to revegetate naturally. No non-native species would be introduced into the area.

Wood Burning: Unusable wood from the project would be the only material burned on site. It would be burned in a fire pit in a controlled setting. Non-burnable materials would be disposed of at an ADEC approved disposal area.

Roofing Material: Metal roofing will be a non-reflective natural color that blends with the environment.

Construction Hours: Construction activities will be limited to the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The superintendent has the discretion to modify construction hours as appropriate.

Leachfield Design: The leach field would be located and designed to meet the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) requirements.

Environmental Consequences of Preferred Alternative

As documented in the EA, the NPS has determined the preferred alternative can be implemented with no significant adverse effect to natural resources, cultural resources, visitor experience, or park management. The environmental effects of the preferred alternative are summarized below.

Air resources will be affected by the burning of wood. However, the volume of wood burned will be limited and the smoke will dissipate quickly resulting in minimal, localized, short-term effects on air quality.

Soils will be disturbed during the project. Approximately 675 cubic feet of soil will be excavated for the installation of the leach field. The installation, replacement and removal of electrical wiring will disturb approximately 425 linear feet of soil to a depth of up to 12 inches. Approximately 130 feet of soils will also be disturbed down to the Katmai Ash layer during the installation of the 1-1/2" sewer lines from the kitchen and bathhouse to the leach field and by the 1" water line from the kitchen to the bathhouse. Given the total area of disturbed soil, however, these impacts will be minor.

The new wastewater system will reduce the potential of wastewater entering into the groundwater. Placement and installation of the new leach field will be located and designed to meet Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) requirements. It is, therefore, expected to have negligible impacts on surrounding resources.

Vegetation will be affected during the construction of the leach field and bathhouse. Three to eight trees of 3 inches in diameter or greater will be cleared from the area. Approximately 970 square feet (0.02 acre) of ground vegetation will be removed during construction. Approximately 734 square feet of exposed ground surfaces will be allowed to revegetate. The overall effects on vegetation will be negligible.

Wildlife could be temporarily displaced during construction; however, any impacts on wildlife in the area will be temporary. Construction efforts will disturb approximately 970 square feet (0.02 acres) of grassy ground habitat and 3 to 8 trees of 3 inches in diameter or greater. These impacts will be minimal, as the area cleared is small and would not be appreciably disruptive to wildlife.

Visitors could be present during the construction and excavation efforts; however, the construction of a new bathhouse and improved electric system will provide improved facilities for guests of the camp, so long-term effects would be beneficial.

The preferred alternative will occur in wilderness. A Minimum Requirement/Minimum Tool analysis has been completed to assess the necessity of the project and determine that minimum tools would be utilized. Effects on wilderness will be minimal.

Because both archeological and historic resources exist at Grosvenor Camp, a comprehensive cultural resource investigation will be conducted prior to any project work in order to avoid affecting archeological resources.

Decision

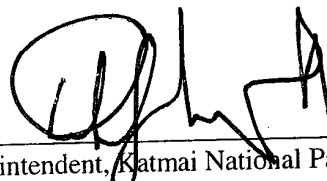
The National Park Service's decision is to select the preferred alternative. The decision included mitigating measures on cultural resources, site revegetation, wood burning, roofing material, construction hours, and leachfield design as identified in the FONSI.

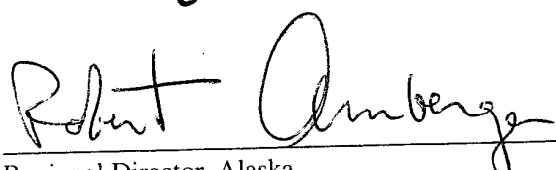
Rational for the Decision

The preferred alternative will improve health and safety conditions at Grosvenor Camp as well as improve visitor satisfaction of the facility. The project will enable Grosvenor Camp to be in compliance with OSHA and ADEC requirements and electric codes as well as NPS standards for employee housing and satisfactory visitor services. The new wastewater system will eliminate the potential for wastewater entering groundwater during times of high water. The Facilities Improvement Program will have a minimal effect on the resources in the Grosvenor Camp area. Overall, the long-term impacts will be beneficial. The levels of impacts to park resources anticipated from the preferred alternative will not result in an impairment of park resources that fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or that are key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park.

The preferred alternative complies with the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and Executive Orders 11988 and 11990. There will be no significant restriction of subsistence activities as documented by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, Title VIII, Section 810 (a) Summary Evaluation and Findings.

I find that the preferred alternative does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1508.9), an environmental impact statement will not be prepared for the project.

Recommended:  3/11/02
Superintendent, Katmai National Park and Preserve Date

Approved:  3/11/02
Regional Director, Alaska Date

Errata
Environmental Assessment for the Grosvenor Camp
Facilities Improvement Program
March 11, 2002

NPS RESPONSE TO SUBSTANTIVE PUBLIC COMMENTS

A 30-day public comment period was provided for Katmai National Park and Preserve's Environmental Assessment for the Grosvenor Camp Facilities Improvement Program. The comment period began January 28, 2002 and ended February 27, 2002. Substantive comments were received from the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA).

Substantive comments and NPS responses are provided below. Substantive comments are those that modify the existing alternatives, propose new alternatives not previously considered, supplement, improve, or modify the impact analysis, or make factual corrections. None of these comments changed the EA's conclusions about the effect of the proposed action or other alternatives.

National Parks Conservation Association

Comment 1: The NPCA expressed the concern that new facilities in a wilderness area be compatible with the surrounding lands. NPCA requested that the roofs of buildings be painted a non-reflective natural color that blends in with the environment.

Response 1: The NPS agrees with the NPCA that building roofs blend in with the natural environment. The EA is amended to indicate that metal roofs will be of a non-reflective natural color that blends with the environment.

Comment 2: The NPCA was concerned that improvements will occur during two visitor seasons in 2002 and 2003. NPCA suggests that NPS put in place restricted hours of construction activity, so as to limit the intrusion on visitor's wilderness experience.

Response 2: The EA is amended to limit construction activities to the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The superintendent has the discretion to modify construction hours as appropriate.